

Philemon Wright, pioneer of the Ottawa square timber trade in 1806 and traditionally viewed as a colourful eccentric, receives considerable treatment, while other equally important lumbermen of the period are barely mentioned at all. It would appear that, since his real interest lay in preserving the oral record of people who are still alive, Mackay did not have the inclination to wade through the mass of information available for the early period in print, in theses and in manuscript sources.

The strength of the work comes in the recounting of the story of the timber cruisers, the choppers and sawyers, the skidders and teamsters, the river drivers, the cooks and cookees, and the countless others who have played a role in hauling out logs from the early years of the century. Using lengthy quotations, often several pages long, Mackay lets old-timers in their seventies, eighties and nineties tell their own stories. They do, with wit and humour. From story to story, the process of the lumbering season can be followed and the tasks each process required from the initial timber cruise to the setting up of camp, through to the cutting and hauling of logs and the river drive in the spring. It is pure social history of the lumberjack's daily life, from his eating and washing habits to the tales he wove to while away lonely winter nights. At the same time, *The Lumberjacks* is an account of the technology which the men served and Mackay has furnished an excellent selection of over two hundred photographs and illustrations to reveal how this was so.

There are some inaccuracies which are glaring to those who have studied the documentary record of lumbering, such as a claim that "until the 1900's . . . a lumberman could choose his 'logging chance' or berth, as casually as he might go fishing". This would have been disputed by men in Eastern Canada during the 1820's. Nevertheless, Mackay has completed a task which was desperately needed and fulfilled the plea of *Sylva*, the house review of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, which in 1948 lamented that: "Soon the old lumberjack will be forgotten. He has had his day. The rising generation will not know him. Canada owes much to the old-time lumberjack who was one of the most fearless pioneers of our land. May his memory never die."

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Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919. A. ROSS McCORMACK. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. 288 p. ill. ISBN 0 8020 5385 8 bd. \$15.00; ISBN 0 8020 6316 6 pa. \$4.95.

Fools and Wise Men. DAVID J. BERCUSON. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, ©1978. xvii, 300 p. 8 leaves of plates. ill. map, ports ISBN 0 07 082644 7 bd. \$12.95; ISBN 0 07 082645 5 pa. \$6.95.

Labour history in Canada has, until recently, been a field of historical research where the moments of crisis and a few prominent individuals attracted most of the attention. In part, this reflects a past preoccupation with other areas of history or may even reflect an element of institutional or class bias on the part of historians in Canada. The last two decades, however, have seen many talented historians trained to work in the field of labour history. Their publications are appearing in increasing number. Ross McCormack and David Bercuson's current studies are two of the best in recent labour history writing dealing with western Canada in the early decades of the twentieth-century. Together the two produce a much clearer interpretation of the complicated labour movement in western Canada between 1899 and the 1920's than had previously existed.

The first decades of this century in the west were a time of cyclical economic boom and depression in resource development, of massive immigration to Western Canada of diverse labour groups, and a period of severe social stress caused by World War I. McCormack's study focuses on "the social and economic circumstances that fostered the movement's growth, the external doctrinal influences that inspired it, and principally, the nature of its institutional and ideological development." Despite opposition from "craft unions, callous employers, and an oppressive state" the radical elements within industrial unionism by early 1919 had established what was to be the maximum level of working class consciousness. General strikes followed, including the well-documented Winnipeg General Strike, along with a parallel development—the rise of the One Big Union. McCormack's study ends at this point with the tension resolved through the failure of general strikes and with the way open for the reform element, the labourites, whose organizations emerged from the chaos intact to assume the leadership of the majority in the labour community through the 1920's.

In *Fools and Wise Men* David Bercuson deals with the story of "the One Big Union—the people who built it and those who tore it down." It is a story of failure but within this failure lies an interpretation of what happened to the spirit of radicalism in the working class movement in the west prior to 1920. Roughly, the first one third of this book duplicates the period of McCormack's book but the approach is different enough and the selection of factual example sufficiently broad to make each book distinctive. Bercuson is the more flamboyant writer of the two and his selection of illustrative material is both informative and entertaining. The objective of the O.B.U., the mobilization of all workers in a region, was a prospect that existing labour organizations and particularly craft unions found threatening. Governments and private business found the same prospect frightening and used and misused the legal system, the law enforcement agencies, and all manner of often violent tactics to break what was seen as a fundamental threat to capitalism and the existing form of government in Canada. In the end the movement failed, radicalism declined and radical leaders diverged along several paths—"to Communism, to traditional politics, back to craft union, (or) out of the movement altogether." The One Big Union survived until the 1950's, a "living fossil" of a revolt long since ended.

Examples of the rich resource of photographic material available for this topic can be found in both books. *Fools and Wise Men* contains an interesting selection of thirty-two photographs on various aspects of western Canadian working class history. *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries* begins with a portrait gallery of sixteen labour leaders. Reproductions of these portraits is not good largely because some were drawn from newspapers.

Extensive bibliographies and exhaustive footnotes are contained in each book. The studies were based upon extensive use of private papers and correspondence, government records, secondary sources and oral histories. McCormack in addition indicates extensive use of newspaper sources as well. Each bibliography contains examples of the types of archival material collected by the respective author in the course of his research. As additional works in more specialized topics in labour history become available archivists may well wish to review collections in these areas in order to prepare more instructive finding aids based upon a better knowledge of the nature of the subject. Although many programs exist for the collection of materials in labour history, much has already been lost and what exists is widely scattered throughout a large number of different collections. Work being done in collection inventories will make the task of those following up on the work of McCormack and Bercuson much easier to accomplish.

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